

The Fairfield Press and Courier

WINNSBORO, S. C., WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1884.

Berett.

Torch with thy virgin lip there flowers; then
Thou art the hair and lay them on thy
breast.
Among them thou wilt weave this heart of
mine.

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Oh, how I pity thy family!
The days and the weeks passed on
into history, as before, until at length
the very air quaked with rumors of a
battle more terrible to read than any
mortality than any which had preceded it.

Rachel heard the rumors in the air,
as she sat in her quiet little drawing-
room, but she did not, as before, hasten
away for the paper. Scanning while
perched to her of dark and dismal fore-
bodings. She felt as she had never
felt before.

Heretofore she had been eager to as-
sure herself of her husband's safety,
but now the feeling came to her that
she did not dare to know.

But little Eddie was moved by no
such dark foreboding.

When he heard them talking of a
great battle, in which he knew his papa
was to take part, he was not a bit
troubled. He had heard of wars and
stand for the sale of papers and peri-
odicals, and he got a paper, telling
the man, "Mamma will pay you for it."

And away he went to his room.

"Mamma! Mamma! Another big bat-
tle!" he called out to his mother.

With trembling hands she took the
sheet, and opened it.

She saw the wilderness of flaming
lines, and she allowed her eyes to
follow them down.

A few seconds, and then, with a low
stifled cry, and a catching of her hand
over her heart, she let the paper fall
and sank senseless upon the floor.

Eddie caught up the sheet, and
looked where his mother's eye had
rested, and those bold head-lines he
could make out, every one. Presently,
two-thirds of the way down, he found
it.

"Colonel Edward Dorrance among
the dead!"

For days and weeks Rachel Dorrance
lay hovering between life and death.
But for her children, she would have
given up and passed over to join her
husband; but the thought of her little
ones left all alone to battle for their
weak young lives turned the scale, and
she lived.

When the warm springtime had come
again, and the birds sang in the great
trees near her door, her eyes brighten-
ed, and she felt in her heart that she
was old, and she went once more
about the duties of a mother.

But she was broken in spirit; marks
of age had come upon her lovely face,
and the smiles were gone to rest in
no more of deep and strong con-
fidence, and when his mind had been
once more, nothing less than a
stroke of Providence could turn him
from it.

"Rachel," he said to his wife, as
they sat alone in the evening
"I should like to be an old man
and my grandchildren, when they gather
around, and ask me to tell them
the story of a battle? If I should tell
them that I had been in a battle, and
that I had been killed, would they
give me any reason? Ah, they would
not ask. They would shrink away,
shamefaced and pitiful; and I can fancy
myself saying to themselves: 'Poor
grandpa! I won't ask him what made
him do that.' Darling, think how I
have talked during the past year; and
how I have proclaimed the sacredness
of my name. And now, my precious,
I am a coward, and I am going to
ask you to tell me what made me do
that, and what of them have done."

"First, Edward, tell me your own
deepest wish."

"Can you seriously ask? I think I
should never look up my head again if
I should not look back."

Rachel swallowed the big lump in
her throat; she kept back the rising
tears, and finally, with her head
bowed, and her hands clasped, she
whispered to her husband:

"Darling, I will not be a coward.
Go, and may the God of battles be
merciful!"

In just one week from that time Ed-
ward Dorrance was in full uniform,
with his captain's commission in his
pocket.

People gazed in surprise. It seemed
to them strange and unnatural. He
was so necessary to the life of the
house, and his little family was such a
picture of comfort and happiness.
What need was there? There were
enough without him. How could Rachel
endure it?

How they pitied her! how they pitied
her! But she was going, and Rachel
knew that she had held his hand and
cheerfully bade him Godspeed.

They saw that, but they did not
see her afterwards, alone in the cham-
ber, upon her bed, kneeling by her
bedside, sobbing and praying, and weep-
ing, as though her heart was breaking.
Ah, they would have pitied her then
had they seen, and they would have
pitied with cause.

But she rose bravely after a time,
and when the first of the past year
she resumed her household duties, and
sought relief from painful thought by
mingling in society, and giving her aid
wherever it could be of benefit as of
old.

At length came word of a battle in
which she knew her husband's regi-
ment was engaged. She hastened for
the newspaper, eager for the true in-
telligence. That hour had fallen
Edward did not enter his mind. He
was found in the paper, and carried it
home. Little Eddie was old enough to
understand and possessed understand-
ing enough to be anxious for news of
papa.

"Oh, Ed! Did Ed! Did Ed! Papa is a
major! There has been a great battle.
Listen! Captain Edward Dorrance, by
his own personal bravery, and mar-
velous daring, saved Hungerman's Di-
vision from ruin, and so, in fact, saved
the day for us!" and here a young
lady, who was made a major, on the
field. "Alas! how many brave men
fell!"

"But papa is safe?"

"Yes, papa is safe."

"Mamma, that will be safe always?"

What a pang shot through her heart
as the eager boy asked the childish
question. She could not answer.

The weeks and the months passed on,
and other battles were fought; and
when the news of the battle came, Ra-
chel could find no place till she had
obtained the paper and read the full
account.

At the end of six months a letter
came from the front that made her
proud and happy.

"My darling," he wrote, "give me
joy. And yet, alas! how many others
must find misery instead of joy. I
have been promoted again, and am
colonel of my regiment. I am the
of the very best in the army. And I
am proud to know that I have the credit
of having done much toward bringing
to its present high standard of ex-
cellence. Colonel Taylor and I last

colonel's widow I'd find friends, such,
Yass'm! I w'd be colonel's cook.
Didn't he eber write to yer 'bout old
Pompey? Oh, we lost a good man
when he fell!"

Rachel wiped her eyes and presently
asked the poor man if he was hungry.
He answered her that he could not tell
how hungry he really was; whereupon
she got up and went out into the kit-
chen; and in the open air she met Ed-
ward Dorrance had purchased as a pup
when his son was born, eight years be-
fore, came bounding into the room.
He saw the negro soldier, gave a sharp
snapping yell, and Eddie called to him
to "be down!"

But the dog did not obey. He drew
nearer to the stranger, and presently
with a cry that was almost human—a
cry of joy and jubilation—a cry not to be
mistaken—he leaped upon the man,
fairly clapping his forelegs or arms
round his neck, lapping, and kissing,
and panting and struggling to get
nearer and nearer, like one possessed.

Eddie stamped his foot and shouted:
"By virtue of authority that ought to
have quieted the brute at once; little
Ella cried with a terrible fear that old
Prince would eat the poor black man
up; while Edward, having heard the
terrible racket, but not caring to go
to the kitchen to see what in the world
the matter could be. She knew that old
Prince was a fastidious dog, and per-
haps he was trying to reject the dark-
skinned invader."

As he stepped across the thresh-
old into the parlor a wonderful thing
happened. The dog, in his frantic
quest to get at the face of the strange
guest, had got his paws entangled in
the matted wool, and presently—just
before the door was closed—he was
head, cheeks, and lips—came away,
leaving exposed to view a wealth of
golden-white, curling, glossy locks;
locks white and smooth, with only a
neatly-trimmed, handsome moustache
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